

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 20 (currently amended): A sample stage comprising:

a table including a supporting portion for supporting a sample and an evacuation portion disposed at an outer region of the supporting portion;

moving mechanism for moving the table; and

a pipe which communicates with the evacuation portion for evacuating gas over a first face of the sample which is opposite from ~~the~~ a second face being supported by the supporting portion.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A sample chamber comprising:

a table including a supporting portion for supporting a sample and an evacuation portion disposed at an outer region of the supporting portion;

a moving mechanism for moving the table;

a cover which covers above the table; and

a pipe which communicates with the evacuation portion for evacuating gas in a space between a first face of the sample which is opposite from ~~the~~ a second face being supported by the supporting portion and an inner face of the cover.

Claim 22 (currently amended): A pattern forming apparatus for forming a pattern on a sample comprising:

a column including an irradiating portion which irradiates beams on to the sample;

a table including a supporting portion for supporting a sample and an evacuation portion disposed at the outer region of the supporting portion;

a moving mechanism for moving the table;

a cover which covers the irradiating portion in the column and above the table; and

a pipe which communicates with the evacuation portion for evacuating gas in a space between a first face of the sample which is opposite from ~~the~~ a second face being supported by the supporting portion and an inner face of the cover.

Claim 23 (currently amended): A pattern inspection apparatus for inspecting a pattern formed on a sample comprising:

- a column including an irradiating portion which irradiates beams on to the sample;
- an inspection system for inspecting a pattern on the sample irradiated by the beams;
- a table including a supporting portion for supporting a sample and an evacuation portion disposed at an outer region of the supporting portion;
- a moving mechanism for moving the table;
- a cover which covers the irradiating portion in the column and above the table; and
- a pipe which communicates with the evacuation portion for evacuating gas in a space between a first face of the sample which is opposite from ~~the~~ a second face being supported by the supporting portion and an inner face of the cover.